

Implications of Moses' quality leadership in promoting good governance in the church

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Abstract

Leaders in different times tried several attempts to deliver quality leadership. The assumption was that none of them yielded the expected results. It has been observed that many desired and aspired leadership out of a sense of being recognised, while others did so just to be above in decision making. These leaders wanted to satisfy their personal interests. They focused on what the position would bring to them rather than the benefits and productivity of the entire organisation. A close examination of the efforts of Moses as he led Israelites from Egypt through the wilderness revealed a quality leadership style. This paper aimed to look at the qualities of Moses' leadership style as a prototype for the church leaders. The paper adopted the sociological principle to examine the socio-biblical impact of quality leadership style in the context of the promotion of good governance among church leaders. The study found out that the leadership style of Moses was effective, efficient, and productive for his organisation. Therefore, in order to have a desirable result in the church leadership, the study submitted quality of Moses' leadership could be adopted.

Keywords: Implication, Moses, Leadership, Promotion, Good Governance, Church

Introduction

Centuries ago, the belief held was that leaders were born and not made. Abilities and traits to lead were believed to be inherited rather than acquired¹. The family a person is born to determine his future socioeconomic status. Macgregor confirmed that the leadership trait of a young struggling company is different from those of a large well-established firm. Lorsch et al contend that the leader is the focal point for the organization of his group. When a leader appears, the situation changes strictly. The conversation becomes general and unified action frequently follows².

¹D, Macgregor, "The Human Side of Enterprise, International" Journal of Hospitality Management. Vol.6, Issue 1. New York: McGraw- Hill, 1960.

² W.Lorsch et al. *Understanding Management*, New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1978



Koontz et al point out that the willingness of people to follow makes a person a leader. If a subordinate is performing below expectation the leader should check if the subordinate is equal to the task in terms of his qualification. He should also find out if the resources available to the subordinate in question are adequate for him to perform creditably³.

According to Odumegwu, Leadership is the art of motivating followers to do what the leader wants or desires, which the followers might ordinarily not like to do. It is a global phenomenon from the psychological point of view, man's things, feelings, and actions are necessary for the continuation of life. It is with leadership and followership activities that organizations grow, survive, and stabilize. Leadership as a concept, therefore, has styles that can be used to operationalise it⁴. Maddack and Fulton explain that leadership style and organization performance must be such that can ensure maximum probability within all interactions and relationships.⁵

The word leadership has many meanings and interpretations. It is a complex process and there are serious reservations over the extent to which a set of standards, qualities or competencies can ever fully capture the nature of what makes some leaders successful and others unsuccessful. According to Cohen, Fink, Gadon, & Wills, A leader is a person who decides on what that work ought to be. This places the leader in a position of providing direction to be taken⁶. Truman defines leadership as the ability to get people to do what they do not want to do. This is the character of the 21st century worker⁷. Leadership therefore can be described as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal⁸. This means that leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. According to Jago, Leaders thus carry out this process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills. This is called process leadership. He also noted that personal traits could influence our actions. This he termed trait leadership; in that it was once believed that leaders were born rather than made⁹.

Leadership is effective when followers have been successfully influenced by a leader to accomplish a shared inspirational goal. Certain behaviours of leaders

³H.Koontz et al. Facts About Leadership and Motivation. Management. 7th ed,1980

⁴C.O.Odumegu. &G. C. Obasi, "Effect of Leadership Styles on Organizational Performance in South East Nigeria Plastic Manufacturing Firms" *Human Resource Management Journal*, 10, No.1, 2018.

⁵R.C.Maddack, and R. L. Fulton, "Motivation, Emotion, and Leadership: The Silent Side of Management" American Psychological Association, Washigton, Guorum Books/Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998.

⁶S. Cohen, et al (1995), Relationship-based Approach to Leadership: Development of the Leader-member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Leadership Over 25 years, *Leadership Quarterly*,6, 219-247

⁷ Ibid.

⁸G.Northouse,. *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oak. London. New Delhe, Sage Publication, Inc, 2007.

⁹A.G., Jago,. *Leadership: Perspectives in Theory and Research*. Management Science, 28(3), 1982

determine the results of leadership. Leaders should be able to use behaviour patterns in an effective manner to positively influence followers¹⁰.

Moses' leadership of the Hebrews, is revealed in all its facets as the book of Deuteronomy which was purportedly written by him. In fact, 167 chapters of the Pentateuch, also known as the Torah, deal mainly with the story of Moses' life. "Everything the Torah tells us about Moses is a lesson in Jewish leadership...the circumstances of Moses' birth are a lesson in the selflessness demanded of the leader"¹¹ and the sacrifices required by those closest to him. The Orthodox Jews refer to him as Moshe Rabbenu, `Eved Ha Shem, Aviha Neviimzya' a, and he is defined as "Our Leader Moshe", "Servant of God", and "Father of all the Prophets". He encounters God when the presence of the divine is manifested in fire at the burning bush. Just as the fiery bush appears in the presence of Moses. It was at the burning bush that God gave Moses the revelation of His name as Yahweh. The Hebrews will through Moses as the instrument, know that Yahweh is their God, while the Egyptians will know that Yahweh has judged them¹².

Who was Moses?

The biblical text explains the name Mošeh משה as a derivation of the root *msh* משה "to draw", in Exodus 2:10: "she called his name Moses (משה): and she said because I drew him (משיתוהו) out of the water." (KJV). The name is thus suggested to relate to *drawing out* in a passive sense, "the one who was drawn out". Those who depart from this tradition derive the name from the same root but in an active sense, "he who draws out", in the sense of "saviour, deliverer". The form of the name as recorded in the Masoretic text is indeed the expected form of the Biblical Hebrew active participle. Josephus argued for an Egyptian etymology, and some scholarly suggestions have followed this in deriving the name from Coptic terms *mo* "water" and *uses* "save, deliver", suggesting a meaning "saved from the water".

Biblical Narrative

In the Hebrew Bible, the narratives of Moses are in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. According to the Book of Exodus, Moses was a son of Amram, a member of the Levite tribe of Israel descended from Jacob, and his wife, Jochebed. Jochebed (also Yocheved) was kin to Amram's father Kehath (Exodus 6:20). Moses had one older (by seven years) sister, Miriam, and one older (by three years) brother, Aaron. According to Genesis 46:11, Amram's father Kehath immigrated to Egypt with 70 of Jacob's household, making Moses part of the second generation of Israelites born during their time in Egypt.

¹⁰J. P.Howell, and D.I.Costley,. Understanding Behaviours for Effective Leadership. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2nd ed, 2006.

¹¹Chabad.org, Lubavitcher Rebbe, "Moses: The Birth of a Leader" <http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article-cd/aid/1153/jewish/moses-the-birth-of-a-leader.2015.html> retrieved 25/3/2022

¹²Jewfaq.org, Judaism 101: "Moses, Aaron and Mirriam".2015 (Retrieved 2022-04-23)

In the Exodus account, the birth of Moses occurred at a time when an unnamed Egyptian Pharaoh had commanded that all male Hebrew children born be killed by drowning in the River Nile. Jochebed, the wife of the Levite Amram, bore a son and kept him concealed for three months. When she could keep him hidden no longer, rather than deliver him to be killed, she set him adrift on the Nile River in a small craft of bulrushes coated in pitch. Moses' sister Miriam observed the progress of the tiny boat until it reached a place where Pharaoh's daughter (Bithiah, Thermuthis) was bathing with her handmaidens. It is said that she spotted the baby in the basket and had her handmaiden fetch it for her. Miriam came forward and asked Pharaoh's daughter if she would like a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby. Thereafter, Jochebed was employed as the child's nurse. He grew up and was brought to Pharaoh's daughter and became her son and a younger brother to the future Pharaoh of Egypt.

After Moses had reached adulthood, he went to see how his brethren were faring. Seeing an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he killed the Egyptian and buried the body in the sand, supposing that no one who knew about the incident would be disposed to talk about it. The next day, seeing two Hebrews quarreling, he endeavored to separate them, whereupon the Hebrew who was wronging the other taunted Moses for slaying the Egyptian. Moses soon discovered from a higher source that the affair was known and that Pharaoh was likely to put him to death for it; he, therefore, made his escape over the Sinai Peninsula. In Midian, he stopped at a well, where he protected seven shepherdesses from a band of rude shepherds. The shepherdesses' father Hobab adopted him as his son, gave his daughter Zipporah to him in marriage, and made him the superintendent of his herds. There he sojourned forty years, following the occupation of a shepherd, during which time his son Gershom was born. One day, Moses led his flock to Mount Horeb (Exodus 3), usually identified with Mount Sinai — a mountain that was thought in the Middle Ages to be located on the Sinai Peninsula. While tending the flocks of Jethro at Mount Horeb, he saw a burning bush. The bush was not consumed and when Moses turned aside to look more closely at the marvel, God spoke to him from the bush, revealing his name to Moses.

The Roles of Moses in the Life of Israelites

God commanded Moses to go to Egypt and deliver his fellow Hebrews from bondage. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that the Lord God of Israel wanted Pharaoh to permit the Israelites to celebrate a feast in the wilderness. Pharaoh replied that he did not know their God and would not permit them to go. They gained a second hearing with Pharaoh and changed Moses' rod into a serpent, but Pharaoh's magicians did the same with their rods. Moses and Aaron met Pharaoh at the Nile riverbank, and Moses had Aaron turn the river to blood, but Pharaoh's magicians could do the same. Moses obtained the fourth meeting and had Aaron bring frogs from the Nile to overrun Egypt, but Pharaoh's magicians were able to do the same thing. Pharaoh asked Moses to remove the frogs and promised to let the Israelites go observe their feast in the wilderness in return. Pharaoh decided against letting the Israelites leave to observe the feast. Eventually, Pharaoh let the Hebrews depart after Moses' God sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians. The third and fourth were the plague of gnats and flies. The fifth was diseases on the Egyptians' cattle, oxen, goats,

sheep, camels, and horses. The sixth was boils on the skins of Egyptians. Seventh, fiery hail and thunder. The eighth plague was locusts. The ninth plague was total darkness. The tenth plague was the slaying of the Egyptian male first-born children, whereupon such terror seized the Egyptians that they ordered the Hebrews to leave. The events are commemorated as Passover, referring to how the plague "passed over" the houses of the Israelites while smiting the Egyptians.

Moses' leadership of the Hebrews, is revealed in all its facets in the book of Deuteronomy which was purportedly written by him. Moses is defined as "Our Leader Moshe", "Servant of God", and "Father of all the Prophets". He encounters God when the presence of the divine is manifested in fire at the burning bush. It was at the burning bush that God gave Moses the revelation of His name as Yahweh. The Hebrews will through Moses as the instrument, know that Yahweh is their God, while the Egyptians will know that Yahweh has judged them¹³(Young, 1967/8).

Since the fire was symbolic of God's presence at the burning bush (Exodus 19:18), Moses is called into God's service as Jacob was called at Bethel. According to Orthodox Jews, Moses did not only receive the Torah from God, (the revealed written and oral word) but also the hidden truth of the Torah, and he is thus considered the greatest prophet ever¹⁴ (Jewfaq.org, 2015). We can also not dismiss Moses as a real or mythological figure or even as a legend. Moses did, in all probability, lead the Hebrews for forty years and his first dealing with the pharaoh was when he was 80 years of age, and he died at the age of 120. In various New Testament books, Moses is significantly identified as the 'giver of the Law' (Mark 7: 10; Romans 9: 15; 2 Corinthians 3: 13). He is also viewed as an exemplary faith-driven individual whom Christians should also admire (Hebrews 3: 2; 11: 24). Paul refers to him as the 'prophet of the Messiah' in the book of Acts (3: 22).

Scripture mentions several leaders who were chosen to lead their people, including Moses, Saul, Solomon, and David, and from their characteristics, we can undoubtedly deduce what traits are needed to be a worthy leader. Moses provides a unique model of leadership, with the characteristics that make a worthy leader. Generally, Moses was a humble man: "The man Moses was very meek, more than all humanity that was on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3), and yet he is happy to confront the most powerful ruler on earth, the pharaoh himself, with an ultimatum to "Let my people go". Shinar states that "one can find whatever one likes in the majestic and complicated figure of Moses (or in the different Mosses that the Old Testament itself reflects)"¹⁵. It is undoubtedly the case, however, that Moses was a very special leader in many ways and was to all intents and purposes a novel variety of anti-heroes and is thus considered to be quite unique when compared to the stereotypical tribal or national leaders that Israel had in its history. Moses also had a speech impediment and God accommodated this by providing Moses' verbal support

¹³E. J. Young, The Call of Moses – Part II, Westminster Theology Journal, 30, 1-23, 1967-8.

¹⁴Jewfaq.org, Judaism 101: "Moses, Aaron and Mirriam".2015. (Retrieved 2022-04-23)

through his eloquent priest brother, Aaron (Exodus 4:16). He was further inimitable as a leader since he received the Ten Commandments from God directly on Mount Sinai (Numbers 10:11) and then passed down the Law. In the Pentateuch, there are many references to Moses as the writer of the 'Law of God'. A few inter alia are: "Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah" (Exodus 24:4), "Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah" (Numbers 33:2), and "Moses wrote this law and delivered it unto the priests..." (Deuteronomy 31:9). In John 5:46-47, Jesus states succinctly: "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" Perhaps Moses' uniqueness was necessary since he was the one ordained by Yahweh to convey the Law to the people. God gave him God-like qualities and says to him "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet" (Exodus 7:1). Moses was also the only leader of the Holy Bible to see God in person (Deuteronomy 34:10). In Deuteronomy, we read "There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10). However, in a different biblical meeting, Moses has forbidden a viewing of God's face, and only sees His back (Exodus 33:20-23). That meeting nonetheless leaves Moses glowing with the radiance of God: "When Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, his face was all aglow with radiance, and they were afraid to come near to him" (Exodus 34:30). This special event and his power to work miracles distinguish him as an envoy of the Israelites to God.

Pharaoh was reluctant to allow the Hebrews to leave Egypt and it was only after the miracles of the frightening plagues that approval for the Hebrews to leave was granted by him. Led by Moses the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea on dry land pursued by an Egyptian Army which perished when the wind drove the sea back (Exodus 14: 21, 27). The Hebrews said to be 600,000 men of military age and also the elderly, women, and children then wandered through the Sinai desert and invaded Palestine.

The Holy Bible for the most part tends to depict people in various situations and does not per se seek to uncover the characters of individuals¹⁶. Moses was a person without any initial appeal as a leader and he gradually became a compelling leader who was nominated by Yahweh to lead the Hebrews out of their bondage in Egypt. At times Moses fulfilled a range of leadership roles ranging from inter alia, faithful shepherd, negotiator, intercessor, hero, tactical genius, strategist, militarist, judge, mentor, motivator, provider, and guide. He coordinated the efforts of specialists and integrated knowledge for the benefit of the people, but his approach was also limited. He did to an extent mobilize the people and drove them towards a common objective. The harsh terrain of the wilderness in which he and the people spent many years undoubtedly further developed qualities of toughness in his nature that were in all probability not developed while he served in the grandeur of the palace of the pharaoh. The environment called for creativity, innovation, and speed of response if effectiveness was to be attained in what was a somewhat turbulent Levantine context.

¹⁶M. Buber, Mamre, *Essays in Religion*, (Trans. Greta Hort), Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 44-61.1946.

Moses was authoritarian when he needed to be, decisive at times, and also very supportive and compassionate towards his people. The definition of Moses as a leader in literature is that he is referred to as a person whose followers remained mostly loyal to him and did so willingly, out of an appreciation of both his power and his charismatic nature. Also, important to note is that Moses as a leader was not coerced to assume the role which further endeared him to his followers. Moses was selected to leave his flock of sheep and rather lead his people, and this was despite his highly restrictive speech impediment. It seems his capacity to be compassionate as was evidenced by how he treated his flocks of sheep was in a way the reason for his selection to lead the lost sheep of Israel. In Exodus Rabbah, it states that Moses was described as a very compassionate person and the word 'compassion' (Heb. Hemlah) is defined in the Hebrew dictionary Even Shoshan, as a word that connotes a highly considerate and sensitive awareness toward people in distress and where there is a deep will to assuage it¹⁷. Compassion also includes discernment of suffering, a sentiment to help, and acting to lessen pain or suffering where it is in evidence. God's compassion touched the heart of Moses and so, the latter's leadership style articulated the compassion of Yahweh who spoke to his prophet saying: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them" (Exodus 3:7- 8). Moses thus became the appointed and favoured liberator of the people from their physical and spiritual bondage. He became a leader once he had an opportunity to practice the craftsmanship of being a leader in what were often perplexing situations¹⁸. Moses has a sense of vocation bestowed on him when God announces, "I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8-9) "So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10).

Lichtenstein submits that Moses tried to involve the Hebrews in the development of their own redemption. He however failed in this task and thus developed a strategy where he took on greater responsibility for what was to happen concerning the redemption of the people¹⁹. On the evidence of scholarly writings, Moses was to all intents and purposes a model of leadership and is undoubtedly the most highly celebrated leader in Jewish history. In Exodus, he saves a Hebrew from an Egyptian overseer who is whipping him to death (Exodus 2:11-12) and also takes a stand against one a Hebrew who is beating up his companions: "...so he said to the offender, 'Why do you strike your fellow?'" (Exodus 2:13). These actions attest to his strong moral character and his decisive action mentality. His strong sense of justice was displayed even at risk to himself. By identifying with Hebrew slaves, he was placing himself in danger since as a prince of Egypt he would be expected to treat Hebrews with far less respect. He also demonstrates a disinterest in personal power but was rather a servant-leader. Moses demonstrates compassion and a desire for

¹⁷Exodus Rabbah 51:1-52: (10th century), Reprinted in Midrash Rabbah: Exodus. 3, 1939. Translated by S.M Lehrman, Soncino Press, London, 562

¹⁸R.J. Allio, *The seven faces of leadership*, Xlibris corporation.

¹⁹M.Lichtenstein, *Emissary and Flock: Leadership and Crisis from the Burdens of Egypt to the Steppes of Moab* (Hebrew), Alon She-but: Yeschi Va tHarEtzion.2001.

justice in various events, such as in his conduct toward the daughters of the Midianite priest as mentioned in Exodus (2:16): "But shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock". Moses went further than what one would have expected as we are told by Jethro's daughter: "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock" (Exodus. 2:19). He stood by his principles and made it his business to help others and did not include himself as one who was offended as in the book of Numbers "Truly, it is against the Lord that you and all your company have banded together. For who is Aaron that you should rail against him?" (Numbers 16:11). He is however offended by, and critical of those seeking fault in him, and admonishes such individuals: "I have not taken the ass of any one of them, nor have I wronged any one of them" (Numbers 16:15).

Jethro gave Moses wise counsel as is evidenced in Exodus 18, and what Moses learned enabled him to focus on more important issues that were often critical. By delegating to others Moses was still the leader of the people but he would spend more time teaching vital spiritual principles to bolster his people and he was also able to implement a legislative leadership style (Exodus 18:19-20, 22). If he did something that some people disagreed with, he did not attack them but rather sought to find solutions to please them. His character was such that he was also well aware of his physical impediments and limitations as stated in Exodus (4:10) "Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue". He thus was not averse to the notion of sharing power as a team facilitator and player.

In Hebrews 11:28 we are told that it was through faith that Moses kept the Passover. He maintains the sprinkling of blood on the door lintels to protect the Hebrew firstborn from the approaching Angel of Death and this shows his acceptance of a moral obligation to do what is right irrespective of possible negative repercussions to himself. He leads the Hebrews to be totally obedient and requires them to observe what they should even in a strange land because it is the 'right thing' to do. Moses also displays his diverse skill sets. For example, he required certain skills to negotiate with Pharaoh and different skills to ultimately lead the Hebrews out of bondage and sustain and grow their community under the Law²⁰.

Moses faces and deals with many and varied grievances such as "Were there no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the desert?" (Exodus 14:11) and "Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free" (Number 11:4-5). Most famously "Why did you take us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no food and no water, and our souls are disgusted with the insubstantial food?" (Numbers 21:5). Irrespective of the issues at hand, Moses comes up trumps as he intercedes for his people and he is even prepared to argue with God from time-to-time to seek forgiveness for their voluntary and involuntary transgressions. Moses persuades God not to punish the people for the Golden Calf incident and the rebellion of Korach (Exodus 32: 31-33; Numbers 16:21-22) and demonstrates to us the real compassion he had for the people as their servant-leader. The apostasy of the people just after Yahweh has

²⁰A. Z. Zivotofsky., The Leadership Qualities of Moses, Judaism, 43, 258-69. 1994.

issued the decree “Thou shalt have no other gods besides me” (Exodus 32), emphasizes to us the lowly depths to which the Hebrews had sunk in their act of creating a golden calf for them to idolize. It is a gargantuan task but Moses intercedes for them with God, to forgive their foolishness and errant behavior and is even prepared to suffer the consequences for their misdemeanors as an atoning action (Exodus 32:30–32). He also forgives others and does not seek to settle scores with his adversaries and is also a good listener. His guidance from God is respected and acted upon as was the case during the burning bush incident and also when he ascends Mount Sinai. He listens and receives a revelation that shapes his existence and that of his followers. Moses seeks justice for the downtrodden and moral conduct drives his actions.

Moses is referred to as a servant of God numerous times in the Bible which in itself is lofty praise. When came of age, he immediately selected God and his own Hebrew people over the house of Pharaoh and all the wealth and prominence that he had as a prince of Egypt. His utter faith in God as the superior being showed his great leadership traits. In Hebrews 11:25 we are told he opted to rather agonize in affliction with the people of God, rather than continue to relish the pleasures of iniquity for a short time. His integrity, moral fortitude, and ethical actions speak volumes about his great leadership qualities. His vision extended beyond the ‘now’ and had a holistic field. It was by total faith that he led the Hebrews through the Red Sea as by dry land (Hebrews 11:29). When God tells Moses to start moving, he does, as any good leader should.

Great leaders somehow never complete their work and so Moses anticipated his death and recognized the urgent need for continuity in what was in progress. He sought and then raised up a leader to succeed him who he personally identified as suitable with God’s help. Moses says: “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people ...heed such a prophet” (Deuteronomy 18:15–19). He selects and prepares Joshua “...son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses” (Deuteronomy 34:9).

Implications of Moses’ Quality Leadership in Church Leaders

Moses’ life is divided into three equal parts of forty years each. The first forty years set the foundation to equip him with the required background and education; the next forty years taught him humility in preparation to serve God and his people. Finally, Moses was prepared to lead the Israelites from the land of Egypt to Canaan over the last forty years of his life. Moses was born in a hostile world where babies like him were under a royal death sentence. However, his family entrusted his welfare and future to God. With God’s will, Pharaoh’s daughter found to care for and raised Moses. In his early years, Moses’ mother trained him in the ways of the ‘God of the fathers’ (Exodus 3:15) and he realized that the Hebrews were his fellow countrymen (Exodus 2:11). Being the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Moses was trained in the art of warfare, leading people, and administering the empire. The book of Acts (7:22) proclaims that he was ‘learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.’ Egypt was considered to be one of the most academic and scientific societies among

ancient cultures. It is thus reasonable to assume that Moses was instructed in geography, history, grammar, writing, literature, philosophy, and music²¹ (Guzik, 2013).

The next 40 years of preparations followed when Moses escaped to Midian. The best theme to ascribe to this period was humility. In Egypt, Moses was part of the royal family, but in Midian, Moses was a stranger (a 'nobody') and became a servant tending sheep, a husband, and a father. During this time Moses learned the true meaning of serving, it is also here at the 'mount of God', that he experienced the glory of the living God. During this period, Moses became less concerned with assets, accomplishments, and relationships. Instead, he shifted his focus to God and the well-being of his people. He also gained the courage to accept and overcome his own impediments and weaknesses (Exodus 4:10).

The culmination of this 80-year preparation finally placed Moses in a position to lead the children of Israel. The exodus from Egypt to Canaan tells us much about Moses as a manager. Indeed, this journey is characterized by change, uncertainty, diversity, and moral ambiguity. Ironically, these are the recurring themes that haunt today's leaders and managers too²². Even though Moses was prepared, he still had to face the reality of the desert. "Getting the people out of slavery was one matter; getting the slavery out of the people would prove to be quite another". It should be noted that before the Exodus, Israel had never been a nation. Instead, it was an ethnic minority in Egypt who, as enslaved people, were not permitted to have national institutions or organizations. "They had departed Egypt as a barely organized refugee mob (Exodus 12:34-39) who now had to be organized into a functioning nation²³". To lead and manage this group was no easy task and soon Moses' father-in-law, Jethro warned Moses: "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." (Exodus 18:17-18)

It was under Jethro's wise counsel that Moses created a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist in the task of administering justice. As a manager, Moses understood the power of delegation but also acknowledged that positions need to match the abilities of incumbents. He thus gave leaders tasks related to their talents and personalities. Jethro taught Moses to appoint and mentor specially selected men to deal with certain issues and groups of people and where they could not deal with a given situation, he would take over the matter and seek to resolve it. Zivotofsky asserts that Moses possessed skills that were in line with what the community required. This practice reported in Exodus forms the basics of modern-day human resource management²⁴.

In contrast to Moses who was familiar with life in the desert (serving Jethro as a shepherd in the Sinai wilderness), the people of Israel were used to an agrarian

²¹ D.Guzik, 'Exodus 2- Moses' birth and early career'. <http://biblhub.com/commentaries/guzik/commentaries/0202.htm> (retrieved 2022-4-29). 2013.

²²Ibid.

²³Theology of Work Project Inc, Introduction to numbers. 2015. <http://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/numbers-and-work/> (retrieved 2022-04-29)

²⁴ A.Z. Zivotofsky, The Leadership Qualities of Moses, Judaism, 43, 258-69.1994.

life in the well-watered Nile delta. The desert was new and terrifying to them and as can be expected such anxiety created conflict²⁵ Moses was blamed by the Israelites for the hardship they experienced, most notably thirst and starvation (Exodus 15:24; Exodus 16:2, 7-9, 12; Exodus 17:3; Numbers 11:1-6; Number 14:2, 27, 29). He also had to face rebellious followers (Numbers 16:11, 41; 17:5,10; 21:4-9). Admirably, Moses had the wisdom to realize that the complaints were lodged against the Lord²⁶

"[The Lord] has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' Moses also said, 'You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but the LORD.'" (Exodus 16:7b-8) He thus called to the Lord to guide and provide what was required. Moses realized that G-d was the leader, not he. He did not take responsibility for the hardships of his followers nor did he try to solve crises by himself. He took the problem to G-d and waited for instructions (Exodus 17:4; Numbers 11:14-15). In God he trusted, and to God, he gave all the glory.

The book of Numbers contributes significantly to our understanding of how Moses managed resources during the Exodus. As effective resource allocation depends on good data, Moses took censuses to quantify the human and natural resources available for the economic and governmental affairs, including military service (Numbers 1:2-3; 26:2-4), religious duties (Numbers 4:2-3, 22-23), taxation (Num. 3:40-48), and agriculture (Numbers 26:53-54) (cited by Theology of Work Project, 2015). Under God's direction, Moses created a provisional government headed by tribal leaders (Numbers 1:4-16). He appointed a religious order, the Levites, and equipped them with resources to build the tabernacle of the covenant (Numbers 1:48-54). According to Numbers (2:1-9), Moses laid out camp housing for all the people, then regiments the men of fighting age into military echelons, and appointed commanders and officers. According to the Theology of Work Project (2015) "Moses' activities of organization, leadership, governance, and resource development are closely paralleled in virtually every sector of society today—business, government, military, education, religion, nonprofits, neighbourhood associations, even families. In this sense, Moses is the godfather of all managers, accountants, statisticians, economists, military officers, governors, judges, police, headmasters, community organizers, and myriad others."

Moses furthermore realized the power of consultation and communication to avoid and resolve conflict. In this regard, he regularly sought advice and counsel from Jethro, Aaron, and Jasua. He honored the leaders of the people and tried to act in concert with them²⁷²⁸. The book of Exodus (cited by Wilson, 2015), describes how Moses interacts with the elders reporting God's promises

²⁵R.F.Wilson, (2015). Moses the Reluctant Leader: Grumbling, Conflict, and Delegation (exodus 15-18), <http://www.jesuswalk.com/moses/4-grumbling>. HTML retrieved 2022-04-29.2015.

²⁶Ibd.

²⁷ bid

(Exodus 3:16, 18; 4:29); passing instructions through the elders concerning the coming Passover (Exodus 12:21); eating the sacrifices with the elders and Jethro (Exodus 18:12); selecting capable men to serve as judges and officers (Exodus 18:21-26); and communicating the Lord's words regarding the Covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19:7). Amidst many conflicts, Moses had no choice but to rely on collaboration and joint problem-solving in the day-to-day execution of decision-making. Moses likewise understood the value of trust in those he appointed as leaders and was not jealous of their proficiencies. When informed that two of the elders were prophesying in the encampment, his response was very different from that of Joshua who wanted the prophesiers to cease their activity. Moses states in exemplary fashion: "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" (Numbers 11:29)

He thus did not stand in the way of those that followed the LORD for self-gain or due to self-importance. Instead, he demonstrates his willingness, as a good leader, to be a team player and is not threatened by the actions of others. Moses' life informs us of the constructive experiences of a man who is an ethical leader and his actions validate the extent to which a leader can perform in what are often trying and highly perplexing situations²⁹.

But Moses was not perfect. Like any man, he had his flaws and his moments of weakness. These shortcomings are faithfully recorded by the Bible and highlighted elsewhere. Several interesting aspects can one deduce from Moses' likely ethical decision-making style as a leader. From a normative ethical perspective, his concern was with the content of moral judgments and the promotion of the criteria for what is right or wrong. He followed a utilitarian approach in that his actions were right in proportion most of the time and he allowed his people to achieve their goals and ends. Moses' ethical stance also provided him with a moral compass, indeed a framework that he utilized to navigate his way through very difficult issues. He also acted in a supererogation manner in that he was motivated to act above and beyond the call of duty most of the time- in this sense he thus fits into the Rule Ethics system of Immanuel Kant³⁰. Moses did not choose to be a leader, rather he had this position imposed upon him by God's grace. He was deemed worthy of the job and was chosen for it because of his noble traits, among them a rejection of wielding power and leadership.

Moses, as a leader, did also not come out against the minority who attacked him verbally, openly opposed him, and picked fault with him. If viewed from a Social Ethics Contract perspective, Moses recognized himself as part of a greater whole. Moses could equally be viewed as a manipulative leader – as exemplified by Machiavelli, where 'the end justifies the means. In terms of this thinking, he did whatever he believed he needed to do to be successful, as long as it was successful. There are also smatterings of Transforming leadership in his

²⁹J. Hoffmeier, *The Arm of God Versus the Arm of Pharaoh in the Exodus Narratives*, *Biblica Roma*, Vol. 67, Face.3-1986).

³⁰ (Stratton-Lake, 1999).

approach as he sought to satisfy higher motives and engaged with his appointed assistants, especially in the wilderness³¹.

Conclusion

Moses' had a huge capacity for mercy, evidenced in his treatment of the flocks, and this was to an extent a determining factor in his being chosen to lead the people. Many scholars have recently evaluated mercy as an emotional factor in the theory of ethics, thus distinguishing clearly between the ethics of mercy and ethics of justice. A permeating approach in the theory of ethics stresses the prominence of developing emotional/social understanding, which leads to empathy and compassion which is what Moses shows us through his leadership style. His ethics essentially came from his God and religion as well as his conscience and intuition and the example provided by his father-in-law Jethro, as well as his siblings Aaron and Miriam and other good people, but especially from a desire to do the best for the Hebrews in every situation he faced with them. Moses made such an impact on Hebraic life that the evangelist Matthew portrays Jesus as the 'second Moses', who is the announcer of the New Law (Matthew 5-7). At the Transfiguration of Jesus, in Mark's gospel, Moses is understood to be present and he validates Jesus' claim as expressed by the voice from heaven (Mark 9: 7).

Moses neither hesitated in nor compromised his God-ordained undertaking and kept focused on what he needed to do and is a model of a dedicated leader whose gaze lingered on the reward of his people entering their Promised Land. He put in place systems that would be operational once he was no longer the leader of his people. His taking of the initiative and decisive actions proved his worth as a leader who was worthy of the job he had. He also made sure to use the gifts of others and created and mentored a team of like-minded assistants to help in the achievement of the goals he had set. He had a spirit of responsibility and interceded for his people with God with a sense of great humility.

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³¹M. Girodo, *Machiavellian, Bureaucratic, and Transformational Leadership Styles in Police Managers: Preliminary Findings of Interpersonal Ethics*. Sage Journals Publication, 1998.

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